WAYSIDE THOUGHTS.

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WAYSIDE THOUGHTS,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL M'MICHAEL.

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PREFACE.

In presenting this volume to the public, the Author considers it unnecessary to make many prefatory remarks, or to recount the disadvantages under which he has laboured through unfavourable circumstances, with a view to excite the sympathy of such as may honour him with a perusal.

Nor does he publish owing to the importunity of friends, but humbly acknowledges that the step which he has taken is indeed venturesome, and can only be reconciled with the consideration that every attempt in literature must be in some measure daring.

Conscious of his inability to produce anything entirely new, the thoughts which he has endeavoured to embody in verse are chiefly on topics which frequently presented themselves to his observation; and with such exercise, in the

intervals of a laborious occupation, his enjoyments have been agreeably multiplied.

The moral reflections may be applicable to general society; and in these he hopes there will be nothing found repulsive to the reader's judgment, as he has avoided anything in the shape of personal satire, but wishes rather to encourage good feeling and harmony among his fellow-men.

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WAYSIDE THOUGHTS.

WAYSIDE THOUGHTS.

Part First.

This is a morning beautiful and still,
And I shall wander out into the fields,
Where birds are singing sweet by woodland rill,
To taste the healthy charms that nature yields.
O'er Straiton hills the sun is rising bright,
The glens beneath are sleeping in the shade—
Sweet varied landscape with its scattered trees,
And shrubs and cornfields waving in the breeze.

The eye is filled with woods and sunny hills,
And flowery plains, with many a rural farm;
Refreshing springs are bursting from the dales,
Dear to the labourer oppressed and warm.

How sweet to him the noon-day hour of rest,
As on the shaded banks his limbs he lays—
Shut from the scorching sun, he rests at ease,
Where cooling breezes wander through the trees.

The air is filled with sounds of streams,
Of happy singing birds and rustling leaves,
As soft and soothing as the voice of dreams;
The soul a sense of harmony receives,
That wakes a tender sympathy for all,
And every hard, unfeeling thought doth melt,—
Impressed with love and beauty everywhere,
Would wish with all its happiness to share.

This leads me on to think of thee, Rousseau,
When walking lonely by Geneva's lake;
There love's pure grief did from thy bosom flow:
Thy sense of all that's beautiful didst make
Thee sigh and weep, even like a little child;
And many a one lamenteth for thy sake,
For thou hadst thoughts mysterious and wild—
A source for all with their own griefs exiled.

And whence does all this love of nature spring?
Why do we love the fields, the streams and trees?
Is there no other source in life can bring
Delight into the pensive soul but these?
Though beauty smiles around us, and the flush
And bloom of summer all around us lie,
By wood, or flowery plain, or sunny hill,
The spirit feels an object wanting still.

There is a face more beautiful than all;
A mind that harmonises with our own;
And there are tender sympathies that fall
From the heart's purest font; a voice whose tone
Subdues the hardest feelings of the soul,
Thrilling with ecstacy the strings of life:
'Tis her we love, in whom we may confide,
Dearer to us than all the world beside.

We see a beauty in her very name,
We hear the sweetest music in it sound.
How vain are all the joys of worldly fame?
Was ever there contentment to be found?

What is ambition but a restless dream,
Deluding men away from happiness?
Kind woman is the truest source of rest,
She fills the heart with all that makes us blest.

We love the cheering light of early morn,
Before the turmoils of the day begin;
We love to walk where dewy flowers adorn
The summer fields; we take a pleasure in
The sunny landscape spreading all around,
And joy and gladness steal into the breast;
But all this happiness would never be,
Had we not learned to love, by loving thee.

But woman is too often ill rewarded,
Crushed by low circumstances, and unknown,
Look'd down on by the proud, and disregarded;
For all she does small gratitude is shown;
The rarest worth is often never seen
Striving from want and misery to shield
The helpless; thus true, modest hearts conceal
More charity than all the great reveal.

There is but little honest truth expressed,
While noble lives sink in obscurity;
How many thoughts in sophistry are dressed,
So that their style appears in purity?
And there are truths we do not like to hear,
So bold they are, yet undeniable:
Plain truth is often an unpleasant thing,
And nothing gives the heart so sharp a sting.

Those who believe the peasant's life is sweet,
I fear have only heard of such a thing,
Experience would teach them this complete,
And truth, but in a different light, would bring.
Rich men can only know the world in part—
It is the fairest side of life they see;
For many things exist that are untold,
As I have said before, they are so bold.

Those who admire the peasant's humble life
Know nothing of the hardships he must bear;
There is no time for slacking in the strife—
A helpless family demands his care.

Through summer's heat and winter's dreary cold,
Continually we see him toiling on:
With all his energy and prudent skill,
Keen, cruel poverty is with him still.

Suppose a man exposed to every blast
Of winter's frosty wind and driving rain,
Thus at the mercy of the season cast—
Through wet and dry labouring on the plain,
And pinch'd with cold, and oft with hunger too;
When he goes home but little fire to warm,
And want on every countenance can trace,
All staring sad and piteous in his face.

From want, perhaps, their lives are snatched away,
And with them all the hopes that life could give;
His sorrows multiply from day to day,
Until he has not wherewithal to live.
In spirits low, his health begins to fail,
His youthful energies are past and gone;
A cheerless gloom awaits him everywhere—
All, all is heartless, and the prey of care.

Where is the worldly joy within a shed,
When moisty damps are oozing through the walls,
Perhaps upon a bed of sickness laid,
While from the roof the chilling rain-drop falls;
Perhaps without a shilling at command,
And helpless little ones his mercy crave;
They must have something, and no prospect where
It can be found, how does he not despair.

Such may despair of every earthly joy,
But life beyond illuminates their path
With constant light that time cannot destroy,
Nor fortune's cruel, unrelenting wrath.
Resigned they rest, whatever may befall,
Believing, trusting, all may be for good,
That he who counteth sorrows will reward
Them for the troubles they have found so hard.

But I will not deny that there are some
Sweet hours of happiness among the poor;
Their joys and woes alternate go and come,
And rest is relished after toiling sore.

But that can never compensate for all
The heat and cold their bodies must endure;
And often gnawing pains and fevers rage,
Which soon bring on the symptoms of old age.

The distance is so very great between
The master and his servant at the plough.
We find the times are not as they have been:
There is such pride and ostentation now
That men are not compared to one another.
What signifies distinctions? all are men;
And pride, with all its ornaments combined,
But serves to show the weakness of the mind.

It is true dignity that bendeth down,
Where pride's afraid of its own littleness;
The man of dignity will not disown
The humblest of the earth, nor will he less
Regard the poor man than the rich, but looks
On all alike; grasping the universe,
The highest and the lowest of mankind,
In the clear, thoughtful mirror of the mind.

Behold the rich with every source of joy,
And smiling comfort at their own command;
But there are fools their happiness destroy,
Too mad the world's temptations to withstand,
The precious blessings of this life abuse;
Their little hearts are thrown away on vice;
And, when the dream of vanity is past,
They sink in sullen misery at last.

Small gratitude the world to such can show,
They have not understanding in the mind;
Their views are worthless, grovelling, and low,
To every principle of virtue blind,
Themselves to gratify their only wish;
From luxury but little pleasure springs,
The more men hunt for pleasure, I believe,
The heart shall find the greater cause to grieve.

There are a few plain wealthy men like this,
Both clear in understanding and good sense,
Who have found out the way of worldly bliss
Without much show of grandeur or pretence,

Who stay at home in ease amid their friends,
Reaping in temperance the sweets of life,
And gently doing good to all around:
It is a pity such are seldom found.

No doubt they feel much happier than those
Poor toil-worn labourers. Their minds must be
More easy when the wind of winter blows;
When from the warm and cheery fire they see
The sleety showers driving o'er the plain,
And all without is desolate and dark;
When fields look dreary, and the days are short,
And nature's face no longer charms the heart.

Content and snug at home, where friendship smiles,
Rejoicing in their happy boys and girls,
Whose prattling sports the evening beguiles;
And surely many a hope the mind employs
That they may rise to honour and renown,
Until their country glories in the name,
Handing it down to many a distant age—
Such dear, consoling dreams men's hearts engage.

And if some favourite book they wish to read,
They can retire into a silent room
At liberty, from all annoyance freed,
Perhaps a while with Milton's muse to roam,
Or Cowper's "Task," or Pollock's "Course of Time,"
Perhaps to sing, with Burns and Tannahill,
According as the mind may chance to be,
In thoughtful mood, or easy, light, and free.

And then in summer, when the fields are green,
And all is beautiful beneath the sun,
To range at liberty amidst the scene,
Viewing the swell of plenty all their own,
Dazzling rich and teaming with delight;
And wealth commands respect from all around—
By servants honoured and by friends beloved,
By whom their very failings are approved;

And many things I have not time to state.
The voice of praise is grateful to the ear.
Pleasure flows from the lifting of a hat;
But such, you see, I need not mention here;

Suffice it that I say they have the best
Picked out of everything the earth can yield.
When men can make their choice of all they see,
They might be satisfied—say, what think ye?

But these are men who ought to be respected;
Much of a nation's power on them depends;
They love their country, and have not neglected
Considering what the poor man's life demands.
They grow acquainted with his cares and toils,
And in his wants can feel and sympathise;
But there are some at home too proud to stay,
Whom nought can please but objects far away.

The strong desire of growing popular
Draws many a clever gentleman from home,
Yet some when they return less hopeful are
Of gaining that which caused them to roam.
Great fame is dazzling to the youthful mind
When thinking of its own abilities;
But then the world is full of clever men,
And that makes eminence so hard to gain.

Obscurity is very dull to bear
By those who have a wish for notoriety,
And many such would sink into despair
Unless they were upheld by gay society.
A proof the understanding is but small,
They learn a smattering of polished wit;
But test the real foundations of the mind
And you may learn that they are far behind.

The man who can retire within himself,
And finds society in pensive thought,
Knows in his soul a joy that worldly pelf
And empty forms and fashions never brought.
He feels an independent source of rest,
And many a happy, soothing form creates;
With each fresh thought new pleasure is revealed
Which is to thoughtless men a fountain sealed.

But I forget that I am standing here
Upon a bridge that spans a silent water;
Within the woods the birds are singing clear.
The longer that I gaze I love you better,

Ye fresh green trees, and flowers of nature's breast;
Like old companions of my youthful days,
Even when your mouldering leaves begin to fall,
And days are dark, you are beloved for all.

Ye Poets who lament for solitude,
This is the land where ye might sing your fill,
Beneath the shadows of the waving wood,
The water wanders solemnly and still,
And green fields spread their bosoms to the sun;
On either side the mountains lift their heads
To meet the early dawn, or to enlist
The hovering footsteps of the wavering mist.

Pleasant it is upon a windy day
To watch the storm which drives along the hills,
While now and then the sun lets out a ray
That for a time the rainy clouds dispels.
Pleasant it is throughout the varied year,
Shielded from summer's heat and winter's cold;
Here all the charms of nature are combined
In all the fairest forms to please mankind.

Part Second.

I like the summer time when days are long,
The warm and sunny weather, when the skies
Are cloudless, deep and blue; I like the song
Of merry larks, and all the nameless noise
Breathing and floating over nature's face,
Far better than the hard, discordant sound
That runs through all the bustle of the town,
Where man must ever strive to hold his own.

I pass a churchyard, lonely looking spot:
A few small stones appear above the graves
Of those below. How soon they are forgot?
That aged tree so solemnly that waves
Has witnessed many a tear and many a sigh,
And many a striving with the hope that saves
From cold despair. How sad it is to die!
How mournful in the silent grave to lie!

Yes, here unnoticed moulders many a heart
That loved this cherished life I now enjoy,
And thought, relentless death! of what thou art,
In fears, perhaps, like those my mind employ.
But you have passed away, and all is still:
Soon must I know the change that you have done:
Some friend above my grave may drop a tear,
And say that such an one is lying here.

There is a source of good in mournfulness;
Though wearisome, it is a pleasing pain,
So true that we can scarcely wish it less.
We like to hear the sorrowful complain,
To see the earnest tenderness of tears;
It stirs humanity within the breast;
But every one must feel what sorrow is
Before he truly learns to sympathise.

And this is all the living here can do—
To mourn their loss awhile and then forget;
Wishing their spirits well, where'er they go—
Living in earnest hopes of meeting yet—

Striving to grow familiar with death,
And trying to believe that all is well:—
Such are the thoughts that occupy the mind
When friends depart and we are left behind.

But these reflections are soon cast aside,
And we grow careless as we were before;
Adown the hurried stream of life we glide,
Remembering our loving friends no more.
Some fleeting object steals the heart away,
Filling the mind with vain, deluding dreams—
We cling to trifles nought but death can sever,
As if we were to live on earth for ever.

A sacred stillness hovers o'er the place,
As if the spirits of the dead were there.
But nought of this is learned. We have no trace
To tell of where departed spirits are.
Forth from unknown eternity we come,
And to eternity again must go:
However high our little minds may soar,
We know but human life, and know no more.

Part Third.

How pleasant, on a Sunday afternoon,
Relaxed from toil, to walk among the fields,
Where the bee's hum is mixing with the tune
Of cheerful birds. The charms that nature yields
Are ever new. Our eyes are never tired
Of flowery glens, of cool, refreshing streams,
Of summer hills, and all the varied maze
Of love and liberty where'er we gaze.

Above Glendoune there is a quiet hill,
High and peaceful: here a while I'll wait,
And listen to the murmur of the rill.
Up in the sky the lark is singing sweet;
I see the ocean spreading far and wide,
Where stands a little island all alone—
A fragment cast up from the wreck of time,
Where silence reigns in solitude sublime.

Beneath, a village stretches on the plain,
All solitary, desolate and bare,
Where galling poverty and hardships reign.
Around its skirts are straying, here and there,
Some pale mechanics, from the loom relieved,
To taste awhile the healthy air of heaven
That breathes a thrilling freshness from the sea—
Blest be the day that sets the labourer free!

How heartless-like appear the abodes of men
Compared to woods and fields where nature smiles,
And streams are murmuring in many a glen!
Crushing and tiresome are the constant toils
Necessity compelleth man to do;
Some want for ever stares him in the face:
And none can truly know it more than thee,
For all thy prospects are uncertainty.

I do not doubt a weaver at the loom
May be as happy's any other man,
Striving to meet misfortunes when they come,
With all the skill and prudence he can plan.

But when there is no work for him to do,
Where shall he find a shelter from the storm?
And when a man is doing for the best,
It is not right that such should be distressed.

I wonder if the great do ever think
Sincerely how poor people live at all
When trade is dull and trembling on the brink
Of all the miseries that can appal
The human heart—and how they really live,
And how their helpless children are sustained?
By all appearances they do not know it,
Or, if they do, have no desire to show it.

Ye high-born rulers of this mighty nation
Know nothing of it, neither do ye care:
Ye do not understand about starvation—
Such humble things ye do not like to hear.
And then the distance is so great between
You and the poor—on whom you must depend:
Compare your palace to a weaver's hearth—
You would not think that both belong to earth.

Had I sufficient confidence and talent,
Some rare and startling truths I might express;
But, as it is, perhaps I should be silent—
The people yet some day may find redress.
Already they begin to look around,
Perhaps ere long to throw their burdens off:
Old Scotland has a spirit, and may not
Be always crushed and trodden under foot.

Although the name is lowered, there's a fire
Unseen, which smoulder's in the nation's heart:
Scotland to native honour shall aspire,
And never from her ancient glory part.
Be confident, be calm, be wise and true,
For much depends on personal reform:
It is the source of every noble cause,
And mankind into strength and union draws.

It is the ground where all advancement rests,
The root of every principle of worth;
The mind becomes exalted, and detests
All that is mean or grovelling on earth;

But loveth all whose quality of soul
Aspires to prove the dignity of man,
And straineth every energy to show
That man may raise himself, however low.

Of all mankind, no one admired should be
Like he of knowledge and of nature's gift,
With feelings bent on weak humanity,
Who, all unshrinking, nobly stoops to lift
A fallen brother from the dens of vice;
Whose generous purpose boldly breaks away
The barrier of distinction, and reveals
All that which pride and ignorance conceals.

'Tis obvious that here is something wrong—
The signs of it are seen above the doors;
Alas! the weak are holding up the strong.
Whose blame is this?—ye workmen, is it yours?
Where does their pride and independence rest?
When you have money they are jolly friends;
But go with empty pockets if you dare,
And you will find what sort of friends they are.

None can deny you have intelligence,
But be more selfish, for the good of home.
That simple knowledge called common sense,
When exercised, is surest to become
The way to all for which men should aspire,
And then it yields perpetual delight.
Tavern debates may show off our abilities,
But next day has a chance to catch us penniless.

Thoughtless men are easily led astray;
They dip again, and are again undone;
Yet, well disposed, we hear the people say,
Bad only for themselves; and thus they run
Straight downward into misery and shame,
To bear the stings of ridicule and scorn
Where'er they go; where'er they turn their face,
They learn the tricks of meanness and disgrace.

The mind grows careless, loses self-respect,
Necessity compels to actions low;
Hence discontent, indolence, neglect,
Are plainly seen in everything they do.

The kindly disposition now is changed,
The greatest aim is learning vulgar wit,
Of aught substantial to make abuse—
Such is the sample of the public-house.

These are the habits formed by whisky shops—
The cause of weeping wives and broken hearts,
The blight of earthly and of heavenly hopes,
And many a good-intentioned bosom parts
From all the ties that render life so dear.
It weakens, chills, and shrivels up the soul.
However good a man has been inclined,
A shattered wreck is all it leaves behind.

Intemperance! thou art a fearful thing,
A winning, blinding, most deceitful devil,
So sweet at first, yet leav'st behind a sting
Which paves the way for every other evil.
Scotland! with all thy wisdom and thy pride,
Why do ye not control this mortal foe?
Behold thy sons and daughters, and arise—
Hear ye not the children's famished cries?

The innocent are weeping for thy wrongs;
They weep—thou art unwise and cruel still.
Glory is vain, when to thy name belongs
The greatest cause of every human ill.
This is the age of progress and reform,
With giant strides, we cry so much about;
But those same strides but little ground can gain
Until the demon of this world is slain.

The greatest want is personal philosophy:
A little of that quality would do
To let the world experience the loss of ye,
Low drinking shops! and set before our view
Wherein did lie the barrier of reform;
But, without this, the nation need not hope
For any scheme of good progressing far
When still the greatest hindrance is there.

Now, if a person would begin to think,
And look upon the world another way,
And let the habits, forms and customs sink
Or swim, nor mind so much what others say,

And put less faith in running with the crowd,
There might be some reality found out:
With fashions old and new, but little trace
Can now be seen of Nature's honest face.

True wisdom cometh not from knowing that
The world is false and full of wickedness;
We search to know, but seldom know for what—
It addeth nothing to our happiness.
This quality is difficult to solve.
I then would say that evil knowledge has
A powerful tendency to draw us down,
And shows temptations we have never known.

The difficulty lies in keeping from it,
Through discontented, meddling curiosity
That will not rest; 'tis hard to overcome it.
How ill to bear its workings, when necessity
Compels us from some interesting scene!
But, when the mind is wholly drawn away,
And thoughts of self-denial are neglected,
Recovery may scarcely be expected..

But to be plain. Look at a workman's home:
He who devotes his leisure hours to reading,
Without a wish about the streets to roam,
Feels gladness from his busy toils receding,
And all about him wears a happy smile,
That yields his heart perpetual content:
He has no street temptations to resist—
This is the way a tradesman's life is blest.

And surely there are few but have a chance
In such a way to cultivate the mind,
Although by slow degrees they may advance.
It yields to all (whoever tries will find),
A constant source of pleasing exercise,
Wherein the mind at any time may rest,
And sweet reflection to the soul reveals,
A joy the idle-minded never feels.

I often wonder what some people mean:
When they have got a leisure hour to spare,
At home their face is seldom ever seen;
They must be out a-wandering here and there

In search of company. What are their families?
Is the society of boys and girls
Not dear enough to captivate the will?
Or are the public houses better still?

'Tis plainly seen we might do better far.
And easy, too, it is to moralise
Upon the strong influences that bar,
When we are in the way of growing wise.
The firmest men have fallen, and may fall;
There's no such thing as self-sufficiency:
One thing is sure, we can be on our guard,
And 'gainst temptations fight, however hard.

Part Fourth.

Sweet is the bracing mountain atmosphere:
I was acquainted with the hills when young,
And ever since their majesty is dear.
A grandeur and a beauty dwells among
The silent scenes where nature sleeps alone,
That calls the soul to wonder and admire
The boundless, overpowering mystery
Of what all is, has been, and yet shall be.

I do envy the shepherds peaceful trade,
Thus wandering among the hills and glens:
A harmony is over all displayed;
The sheep are crouching in their flowery dens;
The streamlet murmurs o'er the rugged linn,
And now and then is heard the plover's cry
From the far uplands near the sunny cloud,
Breaking the stillness of the solitude.

Pleasant it is to lean upon the bent,
And view the landscape spreading far and wide;
Hills rise on hills beyond the eye's extent,
High-towering into heaven on every side.
A river murmurs slowly down the vale;
I hear some voices from the busy farms
That here and there are scattered o'er the plains,
Where rural life in all its pleasure reigns.

Now, while I take a thoughtful, calm survey,
My mind is struck with Nature's wondrous plan,
With all her powerful beauty and display;
And can it be that all was made for man?
Where is our worth to merit such reward?
What have we done that we such honour claim?
Each thing we see is right, and in its season,
But what do we with all our light of reason?

In nature is a law that rules supreme,
O'er everything where reason is not given;
And with what harmony the mighty scheme
Mysteriously moves onward under Heaven!

Behold the seasons as they come and go,
In all their goodness rolling round the year;
From spring's approach to winter's misty shroud,
In sunshine or in storm, all, all is good.

But man a higher mission holds than these,
His soul the great Creator's image bears;
Who, in the order of his high decrees,
Gave conscious being reason, hopes, and fears,
That strive to find the ways of the unknown,
The trembling spirit feels the awful link
That mortal power can never comprehend,
Binding it to existence without end.

I see no curse upon the earth whatever,
It yields in season faithfully to man;
More luxury would make us slight the Giver,
And thoughts of all beyond this mortal span.
Its Author's wisdom everywhere appears,
And in creation everything is right,
There may not have been any purer state
Than that in which the soul's created yet.

We all, in justice, have a chance to stand;
We have a conscience teaching right and wrong;
But sweet temptations smile on every hand,
And so to these we yield, perhaps, ere long,
To feel our eyes are opened, but, alas!
To know the good is lost, the evil gained.
Such is the fate of all who may depart
From conscious dictates planted in the heart.

Perhaps mankind's position under Heaven
Has never been more favourable than now:
The laws of doing right are plainly given,
And no excuse is left, we must allow.
And evil is unknown within the soul,
Before it learns the habits of the world.
Its Maker's work is pure until enslaved
By conscious sin, then all becomes depraved.

But I don't wish in mysteries to dive—
Such things by me are better let alone—
It is enough to know how we should live,
Which in the Testament of Christ is shown;

And of the truth, convinced that all is right
Which cometh from a high and righteous source;
That all is destined but the human will,
Which has the power of doing good or ill.

A fearful havoc springs from earthly power;
What precious lives are trodden down like grass
By cruel war, grim, greedy to devour,—
Ambitious, heartless tyrants are the cause.
Ye who presume to be the lords of all.
Think ye not of your fellow-creature's blood;
How soon thy pride as humbly low shall be
(And life was sweet to them as thine to thee).

Oh, war, thou art a monster in the earth,
Remorseless, wallowing in harmless blood;
By thee lone woman weeps beside the hearth,
And maiden's tears (sweet tears) by thee have flowed,
And broken hearts have sunk into despair
To think on the companions of their youth
Untimely lost; and though the voice of fame
Sings victory, what is it all to them?

How, in the name of Christians, can men
Dare call upon their Maker's awful name
To prosper such atrocious deeds, and when
They know all mankind are alike to Him.
No partiality in Him can be
Whose work we are, the labour of His hands;
Under His care we live, and move, and breathe,
One family o'er all the earth beneath.

Proud-minded man, professing Christianity,
Runs altogether wrong in selfish views,
Deeming himself the favoured of humanity,
And always in the right whate'er he does,—
Bearing the name, perhaps without a thought
Of what true Christianity consists;
It surely is a mockery altogether
For Christians to war against each other.

Progressive people ought to see that they
Proceed with judgment and with due discretion:
'Tis clearly one thing fighting to keep free;
Another, grasping freedom from a nation.

They ought to weigh the feelings of the heart—
How dear to all the region of their birth :
Calmly reflect on lovers, sisters, mothers,
And you may learn to sympathise with others.

But I must now be hurrying down the road;
The sun will soon be set, and from the top
Of yonder western hills begins to nod,
Whereon the shepherd walks, then makes a stop
To gaze around. Like to a little moat
He looks from this low valley. Silently
The chilly dews of evening begin,
And I shall step into the wayside inn.

Part Fifth.

Hail, Night, thou soothing friend of weary toil!
The world now sleeps as quiet as a thought.
Pleasant and lonely now, I think the while
Of all the various ways that I have wrought
Through many changes of perplexing life,
Yet thankful for the good I have enjoyed.
How many of my friends now sleep in death,
While hope's bright beams are smiling on my path.

There's nought on earth that holds us up like hope,
Above all else it clearly breaks its way;
Without it all our energies would drop—
It builds the mind to bear from day to day,
And stretches forward, searching the unknown—
The only stay of many a helpless soul:
Through the thick clouds he sees a tranquil star
Shedding its sweet influence from afar.

Hope smooths our path, and tells of better days;
Of happy homes with peace and plenty crowned,
Still wooing us away, until we gaze
Beyond the troubles that our lives surround.
Next year is all inviting and serene—
Away, on fancy's airy wings, we fly
To lovely scenes with joy and pleasure fraught,
Where every object smiles that we have sought.

A something lies before us, greater far,
And nobler, too, than all that we have done:
Were it not for some obstacles that bar,
Our joys would be complete, our glory won.
The mind is ever fond of future dreams—
Creating pictures for its own relief;
And many a soul would perish, were it not
For prospects fairer than the present lot.

But now the morning meets me in the face,
With healthy breezes blowing from the west:
See, yonder, how the merry lambkins chase
Each other on the summer mountain's breast,

Their spirits light and fresh from nature's lap,
Full of the vigorous, buoyant heart of youth—
Reminding me of childhood's early day
And youthful joys—for ever passed away.

For now I feel that I must part with youth,
As with a lover ne'er to meet again;
The memory turns and ponders, very loath
To bid adieu. There is a languid pain
That nestles in the breast, when looking back
To the society of friendships dear—
Ties that will haunt us to our latest breath,
Long thrust asunder by the hand of death.

And thus, at times, we feel our spirits low,
And life grows weary, cheerless, and forlorn;
The summer of our days has ceased to glow,
And winter comes, by sad reverses worn;
Before us stands the uninviting, dark
And dreary future, like a barren hill
That we must climb—no tract to guide our way,
Nor smiling sun to shed a cheering ray.

When young, we scarcely think we can grow old:
How happy then, when full of love and life,
And prospects fair before our eyes unfold!
How little then is thought of all the strife,
Of all the troubles and incessant cares
That lie in ambush everywhere we go.
Of these we never think, and that is well,
Fears of futurity our joys dispel.

We feel betimes a kind of mingled joy,
Though sad, that lingers on the memory,
The ups and downs of life cannot destroy,
When from the present for a while set free,
To count our youthful pleasures o'er again;
They smile upon us like the light of morn,
And stir the purest fountains of the heart;
Where'er we go, with these we cannot part.

Fairer than all the rest appears the home
Wherein we dwelt when little careless things.
Though far away the traveller may roam,
The fond remembrance still about him clings—

Familiarly the very roads can trace,
And all the streams, and trees, and fields around;
How dear the tender strains a parent sung—
So lovely are the days when we were young.

And these are qualities within our minds
That never can be changed altogether:
Though tossed about by fortune's adverse winds,
The first impressions will not wholly wither.
In us the love of country never dies,
It presses on through every change of scene;
It is the source from which reflection springs,
And objects past in fairest beauty brings.

Whate'er we truly love can never more
Be parted from the heart and blotted out;
We feel the objects that we most adore
Become imprinted and entwined about
Our very being, and are then a part
Of all we are and all that we may be;
Our minds are all composed of memories,
And hopes and fears that only spring from these.

And that is human life—mysterious thing !
Its sweets are lost before we are aware.
Our days are ever flying on the wing,
Still wafting us away from year to year.
How short the time appears to look behind !
How far the future stretches out of sight !
Yet always coming nearer, comes, and then
We close our eyes, but never wake again.

Part Sixth.

It is a pleasant thing to have a friend
Amidst the cares and wanderings of life,
Tried and true, on whom we can depend:
It soothes the heart and yields a calm relief,
And brightens many a solitary hour;
Our spirits feel enlightened and refreshed,
Our keenest troubles for a time are gone,
When those of others mingle with our own.

Most of our disappointments in this life
Depend on how we act to one another;
And spite and falsehood have become so rife,
That few can now be trusted as a brother.
And without harmony there's little peace;
If we would work to one another's hands
In confidence, we would have better days,
And happier be in many different ways.

So many double tricks are now effected,
That honest men do often feel ashamed
If with the rogues in any way connected;
And many a man of principle is blamed
For actions he would tread beneath his feet;
And when deceived he puts but little trust
In man, however fair his promise is,—
And thus the want of confidence arises.

There's more than one would think of false pretences;
Some beings are as cunning as a fox—
You could not fathom them with all your senses,—
And this, I do assure you, is no hoax.
I do not know what pleasure it can give
To work against their fellow creatures so;
But I may safely venture this remark—
Their views are narrow and their souls are dark.

By those, good men are kept from doing good;
A man must watch himself and hold his own
When moving through the world, although he would
That more humanity he could have shewn.

Ungrateful men are never satisfied,
However kind and friendly you have been;
They have no fellow-feeling, and I hate
Such things as these about mankind to state.

Part Seventh.

Late in the evening I wander out;
The quiet moon upon the town is shining;
Her broken lights along the alleys flout,
And here and there a whisky slave is pining.
The clock has struck eleven, and the doors
And window shutters have begun to clank,
Loud words are hard, and clattering of feet,
And out a drunkard reels into the street.

Disgrace begins, he feels it for a while,
His character gives way, and friends withdraw;
At this his foes begin to wink and smile—
Indeed, a happier sight they never saw;
And through the town it is the common cry
That such a one is down all to the bad;
We were expecting it would just be so,
And could have told you of it long ago.

Most men begin to drink with good intentions;
Good-natured people are in greatest danger,
And sure to be undone if they commence once;
Their only way's to keep themselves a stranger
To everything that leadeth in its way,—
'Tis easier going in than coming out;
And then it makes them so confounded jolly,
They can do nought next day but curse their folly.

Through company at first you run into it,
And soon it grows compelling, I may say:
You think within yourself, I must not do it—
It whispers gently, just step in this way;
There is no danger if you mind yourself;
A glass or two will not do any harm.
Without much ceremony you comply,
Which minds me of the spider and the fly.

And what comes after—"sixpence is not much;
A man may take a glass and care for no one;
We'll have another—give the bell a touch,
The day is young, there's time to come and go on.

One glass like that on me is never known:
A man may take a dram and not get drunk.
Above all things we hate a drunken splore—
We like a friendly glass, and just no more."

The dram comes in, and duly set agoing,
But tells a little better than the last,
And lets one know which way the wind is blowing.
I fear the fairest of the day is past,
For now, with making speeches, and what not,
You feel as thirsty as you were before;
And, getting interested in some story,
Must have one more to set it off with glory.

There was a time when men of common sense
Did glory in a jovial, drunken spree,
And argued boldly in their own defence,
However ludicrous the case might be.
But now, by every one of solid mind,
The easy, careless, social joys of drink
Are all found out to be a damned delusion:
Happy are they who come to this conclusion.

I often think our happiness depends
Much on some purpose that we entertain:
He who, without consideration, spends
His time and every energy to gain
The present pleasures that around him lie,
Feels in his mind divided and perplexed—
Excess or luxury in any thing
Some disappointment never fails to bring.

Of all the worldly joys that I can see,
The surest seems to rise from money making;
And, if a temperance preacher I shall be,
No doubt the public-house will get a shaking,
And after that I'll launch into a strain
On all the joys that spring from saving cash,
And prove by clear, convincing demonstration
That saving such might be the soul's salvation.

When my teetotal lectures will commence
Is more than I am able here to say;
However, I shall venture to advance
Some fresh ideas of the common way—

Not to hold down the people, rather draw
Them up to take a higher view of self;
Above all things on earth I'll not neglect
Enforcing on my audience self-respect.

With daily drinkers I would first begin,
And show them that the joys of drinking are
Of no avail when still the glass is in;
And much astonishment I would declare,
That men of common sense have not found out
That once a week its joys are only felt.
The daily tippling I would prove a curse
To soul and body, character and purse.

When weekly, I would let them understand
They ought to entertain a higher view
Than getting drunk so often, that the grand
Established good of drink is to renew
The system by one grand refreshing dose,
Regaling soul and body all at once;
And I would show, from high authority,
That once a quarter is the time to try.

But to these quarterly philosophers.
A higher strain would have to be applied
Than my abilities may reach—so far's
The little specimens that I have tried
Do indicate: but there are little things,
You will observe, that often do escape
Minds of the very brightest, highest class;
A mite is powerful in a noble cause.

Then I would hint the last that I did mention
Should be impressed with something very great,
Which is just now beyond my comprehension,
Perhaps, in any kind of verse to state.
At all events, they ought to be addressed
As men belonging to a great reform,
So that they might with conscious strength go forth,
Nor stand aloof as men of little worth.

The safest way for mankind to advance
Is by degrees. Those who would rise by flight
Are fond of miracles: I speak by chance,
Without deciding whether wrong or right.

To cry the Scriptures in a drunkard's ear
I mean to say is not the plan to turn
Him from the vice to which he is enslaved:
Teach self-respect, and then he may be saved.

To those habitual drinkers on the whole,
Whose aim's to drown their senses every day,
To cry at them that they will lose their soul,
Amounts to nought but throwing words away.
Or if it should awake a spark of fear,
To put it out again, they're almost sure
To make a plunge down over head and ears,
Which is a certain way of quenching fears.

What does a drunkard care about religion?
The contrast is a very fearful one.
Our lecturers should try the mind to lead on
Slowly. Many a patient's overdone,
When worn away to weakness by disease,
Killed by the means intended for their cure—
By nothing else, which seemeth very hard,
Than by the mode they were administered.

The signing of the pledge is very good
For those alone who are inclined to drink,
And fully bent to have the lust subdued,
But dangerous to those who never think,
Nor feel an inclination to the bait.
I have no doubt teetotallers do harm
By pressing inexperienced youths upon
A cause that they might safely let alone.

All those who pledge to-day and break to-morrow
Grow careless and infirm in principle,
For evermore it drives them into sorrow—
Perhaps they might have been invincible.
There are a few exceptions, very few.
We see this verified in many ways:
It never fails that any vow or token
Is ten times worse than none at all when broken.

I know a man who never thought of drink
Until they pressed on him the pledge to sign;
And after that he could not help but think
Of alcohol, and sorely did repine

To feel it had him bound in such a way;
He strove a while, but broke the bonds at last,
And headlong into drink himself he threw:
Such instances, I am told, are not a few.

Our lecturers are always saying we—
Only meaning we who sign the pledge—
However temperate a man may be—
However much his efforts he engage
To quell the dreadful habits of the land—
Unless he follow all their little rules,
They make him out as bad as any drunkard—
And what they mean by this I've often wondered.

For bar-maids, Oh! ye lecturers should feel,
When thinking on them and the place they're in.
Dear girls, I often wonder why you dwell
Amid the sallies of the libertine.
How soon thy youthful innocence is lost,
Never, alas! to be recalled again.
It is a sin that such should be the case—
Parents might keep their girls from such a place.

Had I a daughter, it is not the shop
That I would send the lovely creature to.
Parents! you will consider this, I hope—
A heavy charge of them depends on you.
The public-houses are the very dens
Where vice in every form triumphant reigns,
The source of crime, of hunger and of death—
Remove thy daughters from their blasting breath.

Part Eighth.

This day I reach another country town,
Which knows the rough and stormy side of life:
By constant toil and hardships they have grown
Firm and unbending in the gnawing strife
With poverty—that keen, relentless foe,
Which tries the real foundations of a man,
Yet builds the mind with fortitude secure,
All disappointments calmly to endure.

The burden of the world to them is light:
From youth they learn experience, and grow
Invincible, that nothing can affright
Them on the barren tract on which they go.
Such is the privilege of being poor:
It forms new qualities within the mind,
That, with a cool and truly noble grace,
Deliberately looks hardships in the face.

Of this I have some knowledge from a man
Who, in this life, knew many different ways,
And, like to these, his sentiments began:—
He said, "When in the bloom of youthful days,
The only aim I found was praise and wealth,
Which danced in smiles before me everywhere;
While to enjoy I eagerly was bent—
The phantoms fled, and all my hopes were spent.

"Yes, time, or chance, or fate, or all of these,
Make wondrous sport of us poor things below;
It is not with the world as we would please,
But with its changes we must come and go.
And disappointments everywhere surround,
Till nought is left to meet another day;
And then, at last, in earnest we receive
The real meaning of the life we live.

"Though I am poor," said he, "and still may be,
Yet all is well, if I am thus content,
And with my circumstances can agree:
Riches are good if troubles are not sent.

All have a want of something still to bear;
The objects that we most are bent to gain
But very seldom fall unto our share,
And frequent disappointment brings despair.

"We ought to be contented, bearing all
With calmness and in resignation too;
As mankind from their best estate may fall,
We should not anything too hard pursue;
There is a medium when all is well:
The will for doing what we should not do
Produces sorrow more than I can tell,
And soon does every principle expel.

"Even we have a rest when all is past,
When all our paltry thoughts of earthly fame
Take up with dull obscurity at last,
And hope has ceased to kindle into flame.
We grow to little things around us, and
Become familiar with the cares of life,
Still striving for the good, and dreading worse,
We gather knowledge from the purest source.

" Let all be cautious how they would advance,
Whatever station they may occupy;
Weigh over in the mind each consequence,
Keep watching with a shrewd and careful eye.
This life has often many winning smiles,
And promises that you may not resist,
If in necessity thy lot is cast,
Shall leave you at the mercy of the blast.

" In every circumstance beneath the sun
Nought can be like unswerving principle,
By which our actions move in unison,
Our thoughts combine and grow invincible
Against insinuations and deceit,
Breaking their way into a higher sphere,
While the unstable grovel far behind,
Sinking every virtue of the mind."

That is about the sum of what he said,
And, to my understanding, was as true
A picture of his mind as could be made.
He told his mind as people ought to do,

In plain and simple language, brief and clear,
Experience expressed in every word,
Which is the certain way to give effect,
And so his words I did not all neglect.

Part Ninth.

This day I linger where the name of Burns
Arose a wonder 'mongst the names of men:
See, as a stranger passes by, he turns,
And at the little cottage looks again—
The little cottage where the Bard was born,—
And feels a warm, enduring sympathy:
His songs are dwelling in the nation's heart,
And of its very soul they form a part.

And far away, on many a foreign land,
This lovely, hallowed spot of earth is known,
Where many a kindred soul would wish to stand
And view the shadows of the days now gone;
Where Scotland's best beloved poet sung
His joys and sorrows on the Banks of Doon:
Behold, his name is now the pride of earth,
And glorious to the country of his birth.

A stillness dwells around his lofty fane,
And beauty sleeps upon the woods and fields;
The soul of quietness breathes o'er all the scene:
'Tis surely true—departed greatness yields
A voice that speaks in nature, and reveals
The light of genius, though the clay be dead:
Its gentle whispers to the heart we hear
Stealing around our being everywhere.

This is the very ground where he has trod—
I think I see his dark and glowing eyes—
The spirit there enshrined to Nature's God.
He turns and mourneth when a daisy dies,
And, as a prophet, reads his own dark fate,
And sings in tears man's inhumanity,
But loved them all with feelings warm and strong,
Thus gave away his heart and soul in song.

He lived not for himself, but lived to prove
The beautiful and true, and leads the way
To happy scenes of innocence and love,
Holding communion with us night and day,

Nor ever leaves us, whereso'er we are—
From the low, peaceful Cottage in the vale,
To where the appalling shouts of battle rends
The skies, his courage and his love extends.

Sadly I gaze upon his noble bust,
And painfully I think of all his woes;
But young in years when laid into the dust,
And spiteful spirits laboured to expose
The failings of that great, mysterious soul,
Which left amongst mankind the name of Burns;
It was in vain; the light by nature given,
"If ere it led astray, was light from heaven."

Now we regret that in his native land,
Dear Bard, he should have been neglected so;
Alas! his country did not understand
The high-souled meaning of his music's flow;
They might have cheered him in a lonely hour,
He who did love to share another's woe;
And saw the storms of fate impending lower,
That crushed him low with overwhelming power.

There lies his bible, witness of the truth
And love that dwelt within him for the fair
And dearest, truest lover of his youth;
Behold the lock of Highland Mary's hair!
No wonder that poor Mary loved her Burns.
She died. He wept his loss and went away
Into the world; there he enrolled her name
In cloudless glory and in spotless fame.

We love thee, Burns, for all that thou hast done;
We love thy honest, independent pride;
We love thee for the glory thou hast won,—
Thou art the king of men, and dost preside
O'er all that's lovely, brotherly, and true;
Thy failings we would almost dare to love;
Thou art the truest teacher of the heart,—
And thus with thee mankind shall never part.

Now with reluctance I must pass away,
Thy very name, fair river Doon, is dear,
Upon thy banks the stranger loves to stray,
Thy murmuring is music to the ear.

The very trees are dearer, and thy flowers
More sweetly spread their blosoms to the sun,
Because it is the Poet's place of birth,
For evermore a hallowed spot of earth.

Thus far I have been rhyming by the way,
In language not so clear as I would like;
Perhaps, through want of order and display,
My best and strongest truths may fail to strike.
There is a way in making truth convince,
Which I can never do as I would wish:
Realities are what I would be at—
My purpose may be understood by that.

But let it go, if I have done my best,
Then what more can I do; and, strange to say,
There is a something even makes us blest
To tell our minds, though in an awkward way.
I yet may do it with a better grace.
Experience is the sagest teacher still;
And thus, with perseverance on my side,
I battle on, whatever may betide.

Those who have learned the art of composition
May trace my imperfections everywhere;
Should they denounce me, sad is the position,
And very hard and difficult to bear—
It may be asked, why then do I write?
I find no answer here that I can give,
Except that there are some may not reject
My verse—and that is all that I expect.

I now confess it makes me feel afraid
To think that I attempt to write in rhyme;
My friends do talk so lightly of the trade;
"Why spend," they say, "on vanities your time?
How many poets perish in the winds—
The hollow freezing winds—of disregard?
And when they look for aid, no aid is there,
To save them from the grasp of cold despair."

Poets by some are all accounted poor
And wretched beings, striving for a name,
Inconstant as the wind, and never sure
Of what they would be at; ambition, fame,

For ever flashing o'er them like a dream;
Striving to grasp a phantom never found;
Unfortunate in love, by love enslaved,
And by their reckless passions sink depraved.

I don't presume to take the name of bard,
Nor any name pertaining to the great
Wits of the world. To gain fresh ground is hard.
The height of my ambition is to state
A few impressions in a humble verse,
And if they are rejected, let them go;
Nor will I condescend to break my heart,
Although the world should fail to take my part.

Yet I would cross the selfish-minded, who
Hold forth that poets are a worthless class;
And even think themselves superior to
The greatest poet now or ever was.
And when they deign to drop a word of praise,
'Tis sure to be in such a style as this—
A witty body Burns, but soon destroyed
Talents that others might have well employed,—

Which is a shameful manner to decide.
Allowing Burns did sing in whisky's praise,
And told his little faults that others hide,
Is that enough for all the world to raise
A cry that poets are intemperate?
Why should they also cast it up that Burns
And Byron were by passions headlong hurled,
As if no other bards were in the world?

Have we not mighty Shakspear, Milton, Pope,
Hector Macneil, Wordsworth, and Walter Scott?
Think also on the darling Bard of Hope,
And many other names without a blot.
Have we not heard the moral muse of Crabbe,
Kirk White, and Cowper, pure as running brooks,
And Alexander Smith and Tennyson—
A monument of temperance each one!

Should it appear that I have spoken hard,
As one who feels not for his fellow-men,
Permit me here to say that I regard
All men as friends, but actions I disdain

That blast the principles of love and truth;
And narrow-hearted pride I do despise;
For I would wish that mankind, great and small,
Would be as brothers, yea, and sisters all.

A Winter Walk.

A WINTER WALK.

Part First.

It was a calm November afternoon,
And, having closed my work at two o'clock,
I ventured on a ramble out of town
To taste the health-invigorating breeze;
To see the face of winter in the fields,
And feel the weight of silence in the hills.
He who is pent up in the smoky town
Behind his desk, or in the dingy school,
Or 'mong the whirl and noise of factory wheels,
With eyes inflamed and all besmeared with dust,

Or all day toiling at the flaming forge,
Knows how to prize these precious breathing times;
He feels a new life running through his veins,
And all his hopes and energies expand.

When past the outskirts of the city's din,
I came upon an old cart-tracked road
With yellow whinns and hedge-rows on each side;
Some aged trees were standing in the sun,
Which glittered faintly through the naked boughs,
That stretched to heaven their supplicating arms;
The sky had all that solemn, quiet blue—
That melancholy aspect which is seen
A day or two before a storm comes on.
As in the streets of Glasgow business men
Pursue, with nervous step and thoughtful eye,
The aim of their existence; so the train,
That slave obedient to the human will,
With earnest purpose rushed along the land;
The miry moleman stalked across the lea,
And from his shoulder hung a bunch of traps;
The foaming horses hanging down their heads,
With labour stiff and weary worn, all day

Huge harrows trailing through the cloggy soil.
Along the headland stood a row of sacks,
While up and down the sower beat his way,
And through his fingers showered the shining wheat.
As people, bustling, murmur on the beach,
When emigrating to a foreign land;
So in mid-air, the congregated crows
Were clamouring o'er their meditated flight.
Far in the west, tall hills were capped with snow;
The long white Grampians in the distance rose,
Behind whose giant backs the sun went down;
Cold stars began to twinkle in the sky;
And, on the dark side of a sloping dale,
A shepherd and his dog were dimly seen
Collecting all the sheep into their fold.
A rumour had got up throughout the day,
That snow would fall before the morrow morn;
The water-fowl were screaming on the lake;
The crows were wheeling wildly through the air;
A robin lighted on the window ledge;
A small gray cloud was rising in the west;
The shepherd with his weather eye could see
In these the shadows of a coming storm,
And every creature must be gathered in.

Engaged thus with many sights and sounds,
Pleased with myself and everything around,
I wandered on along the rumbling road;
And, without halting to collect my thoughts,
I landed in the courtyard of a farm.
The signs of peace and comfort here are seen;
And sheltered well from every wind that blows,
A little park behind the barn was filled
With tall straight stocks of barley, wheat, and corn,
Whose tapering tops were pointing to the stars;
Long fields of stubble stretching to the hills,
With groups of cattle gathered here and there,
Shone white as autumn in the fading light,
Young frantic colts were scampering o'er the green;
The steaming horses, loosened from the plough,
Were plunging back and forward in a pool,
From which a string of geese came waddling up.
The farmer, leaning sideways on his staff,
Surveyed the fruits of all his labour, and
Rejoiced in humble thankfulness of heart
To mark the hand of Providence in all.
"But, man," said he, "who knows but little here,
How often this forgets—forgets the power
That giveth life, and everything sustains

And kindly ministers to all our wants.
How vain are all the means by which men try
To move that power from his eternal laws.
Man pleads with him to fill his poor desires,
And knows not that of which he stands in need;
For He who made us, surely knoweth best
When to withhold from us, and when to give.
The true desire through all my life has been,
Not to prescribe the wise Creator's ways,
But humbly thank Him, with a grateful heart,
For all the good that he has done for me."

Before the house you entered you could hear
The great fire blazing on the kitchen hearth.
It was a healthy and refreshing sight
To see the great pot boiling on the fire,
And all the children romping in their glee,
With faces shining in the rosy light.
The cook now, with her lusty arms, laid hold
On the great pot and swung it from the fire,
And with a shrill and terror-striking cry
Alarmed the youngsters, and made way to where
A row of plates were on a table ranged,

In which she poured the "chief of Scotia's food."
England may boast her barmy bread and ale;
Fermented, frothy stuffs are far behind
Old Scotland's scones and cakes and caller milk,
The wholesome parritch, and the sparkling broth.
May every Scottish home enjoy such fare,
And never cease to be "the land of cakes."

Meanwhile the ploughmen have their horses fed,
Rubbed down, and fresh hay thrown into their hecks,
And, with a clank, the stable door is shut;
You hear their loud feet coming through the court,
The jocular talk, the free-and-easy laugh;
The shepherd, with his plaid swung to his heels,
In it has caught the dairymaid, and now
The children shout, the ranting collies bark,
The cocks and hens are cackling from the shed,
The very pigs are startled in their stye,
And everything joins in the general mirth.

Part Second.

Old granny, looking out above her specks,
Still kept her corner by the ingle side,
And had a word of caution to them all,
She thought it time they ought to gather sense,
At least they might in peace their supper take,
And always should be thankful for the same,
And, turning round, addressed herself to me :—
" How well I mind when I was young like them,
And full of mischief such as they are now;
When looking back, it seems like yesterday
Since my own husband, now within his grave,
First came to see me on the banks of Dee.
And many a weary mile he had to come
Along the lonesome dreary mountain road;
This was the second time that we had met,
And when I asked him what he wanted there,
He said he could not be content at home,
And all the way had come to see my face,

And though I say't myself, but very few
In all the country side were better like
Than I was reckoned in my youthful days.
We stood a little, near the old peat stack,
And tried to listen to the corn craik,
And when I hinted that he should depart,
He bade good night, and kindly pressed my hand,
And went away along the dreary road;
But I was sorry after he was gone.
And, though my memory is sorely failed,
Those happy days I never shall forget,
For many a pleasant meeting we had there;
And many a walk we took among the hills,
And many a wander by the river side,
When summer winds were blowing fresh and cool,
And all the birds were singing in the trees,
And so my faith was strengthened in his love,
Until, at length, our marriage day came on,
And all was joy. I think I see him yet,
When driving home along the dusty road,
His bonnet set a wee thing to the side—
No one had ever seen him look so well.
We lived together six-and-thirty years,
And all that time without an angry word.

But I am very old and helpless now,
And filled with sorrow; when I think of him
It makes me miserable, and yet I love
To speak of what I know will give me pain.

"When sitting here, reflecting by the fire,
I often think how wonderful it was
How we were cast in one another's way.
One Sabbath day, when coming home from church,
A fearful thunder-shower began to fall,
Which made me think of running through the fields
To seek the shelter of a neighbouring tree.
Beneath that tree my future husband stood,
A tall and handsome youth of seventeen.
Was it not very strange that I should run
Straight off my way unconsciously to meet
The man who was appointed to be mine?
Though many people lightly think of this;
When tracing all my lifetime o'er again,
I cannot help believing that it was
The hand of Providence that brought us there.
In human wisdom I have little faith,
But I have tried these many years to keep
The way through life which was ordained for me.

"And now old age has laid on me his hand,
My voice begins to tremble when I speak,
My feeble limbs are tottering when I walk,
And days and nights of frailty are at hand;
Thus, wearied with the burden of my years,
Sometimes I long to close my aged eyes,
And lie down quietly in my mother earth
Contentedly, as when an infant lays
Its humble head upon its mother's breast.

"This life, to me, was filled with many cares—
Sweet tender cares, and many pleasing charms;
My joyous youth when everything was new;
My riper years with happy children blessed,
And felt the greatness of a mother's love,
And knew the kindness of a husband's care.
But purer, sweeter thoughts than all of these
Have cheered and comforted my broken heart.
Sometimes I feel my spirit melt away
Into the regions of my heavenly rest;
Fllled with the most unspeakable delight,
For Providence has ever been my friend,
And guided all my actions hitherto.
And I am humbly thankful when I think

That strength has still been granted me to bear
The many cares and troubles that have been
So much my portion through a long, long life;
Great duties have been pressed upon my heart;
The ardent prayers for my children's weal;
The fear that dangers unforeseen might lie
Across their path, between them and the grave;
The fear at times that poverty might come;
The wish their simple lives might be preserved,
And kept from falling in temptation's way;
The hope that in their actions I might see,
When near my journey's end and looking back,
The beauty that attends on virtuous deeds—
All these anxieties have made this life
An earnest and a serious thing to me."

And here the good old lady made a pause;
The shepherd spoke of going to the town,
So I came with him down the rumbling road,
Reflecting on what I had seen and heard:
A wiser and a more contented man.

Miscellaneous Poems.

POEMS.

A Precept.

Dear friend, as life you wander through,
This precept always bear in mind,
To those that thou hast proved true
Be ever generous and kind.

When mixing in the world, you may
Not meet with many open foes;
But narrow minds their friends betray—
Put little confidence in those.

Think, ere you trust the voice of praise,
Keep watching, have your judgment clear;
For there are many winning ways,
But little in them found sincere.

Lend not thine ear to vulgar wit;
  Discountenance all that is rude;
To sage experience submit,
  And imitate the wise and good.

A Song of the Affections.

With affection I thought I had done,
  And I thought my feelings were sober,
  That my feelings were seared and sober,
Till I met in the middle of June
  (And this is the month of October)
With the wonderful light of the eyes,
The luminous eyes of Eliza.

Our walk was happy and lonely,
  On the sands by the side of the sea,
  The side of the sounding sea;
And when we spoke it was only
  Regarding the future, for we
Were high in the spirit of hope,
And the wisdom that never shall die.

But, alas! when our faith was bright,
And our thoughts were tranquil and sweet—
When we revelled in all that was sweet,—
Our day was changed to night;
For her guardian angel above
Prepared her a home in the skies,
And parted my lover and me.

And now I do hope for the best,
For it taught me the beauty of truth—
The beauty and love of the truth.
And I think and I dream of the blest,
And my spirit shall conquer in death—
Shall revive in the shadows of death,
Through the truth of her lustrous eyes.

ANOTHER OF THE SAME.

When I knew that Eliza was dying,
My feelings grew helpless and feeble—
My heart grew dreadfully feeble;
For remorse, in my bosom replying,

Awakened and filled me with terror;
Alarmed and filled me with terror;
And I sought for relief, but in vain,
For I knew that I once was in error:
When she talked to me of hereafter,
I said it is surely but dreaming,
A history all and a fable,
That the grave is our rest, where we never
Awaken, but sleep there, and slumber for ever.

And this is the cause of my sorrow,
For the words were carelessly spoken—
The words were foolishly spoken.
Could I from forgetfulness borrow
One drop that would wash them away—
That would utterly wash them away!

For remorse is a troublesome thing—
Remorse is a restless thing;
And not for myself do I mourn,
But the soul that was wounded and grieved,
For the heart that was vexed and grieved;
And contentment I seldom shall find
Till my faith is changed from above,

By the love of her home in the skies,
Through the peace of the heavenly skies,
Till she look on my soul from above,
With love in her luminous eyes.

My Helen.

Where'er I am, where'er thou art,
There is a thought within my heart
Turns to thee still, and will not part,
My Helen.

It is that sweetest care I feel,
The wish that's for another's weal,
That I can never all reveal,
My Helen.

It cheers me through the wintry day,
Delights me when I'm far away,
And lends to life a brighter ray,
My Helen.

There is a pleasing joy and pain,
To think and think on thee again,
Striving thy image to retain,
My Helen.

Though far removed by time and place,
My memory the charms can trace
That dwell so sweetly on thy face,
My Helen.

How dear to me thy joys to share,
How dear thy sorrows all to bear,
With ever-loving tender care,
My Helen.

Thou art my hope of future years,
The object of my hopes and fears,
In thee the light of life appears,
My Helen.

While thus my heart on thee is set,
'Tis sweet to think that we have met,
How strange the time that I forget,
My Helen.

But words, alas ! can never show
The thoughts that in my bosom glow,
That none but thee may ever know,
My Helen.

Although not what I ought to be,
I'll prove as kind and true to thee
As any one of high degree,
My Helen.

Still let me share thy kind respect,
That on thy love I may reflect:
There's nought so sad as cold neglect,
My Helen.

Oh, lingering time, that thou wouldst fly,
Impatiently I heave the sigh,
To meet again that tearful eye,
My Helen.

Then shall our hearts unite in one,
To part no more beneath the sun,
Till our last sand of life is run,
My Helen.

The Poor Old Man's Complaint.

Alas! I'm now a poor old man,
And life's gay scenes are o'er,
The proud look on me with disdain,
Because I'm old and poor.

I move about from door to door,
And of my wants complain;
My heart has sorrow now in store,
Where joys did once remain.

Once I was young as you are now,
With health and pleasures rare;
Nought on this earth could make me bow,
All dangers I could dare.

Beneath the haughty Wellington,
For British rights I fought;
And now, when all my strength is gone,
I'm looked upon as nought.

Yes, many a battle day I've seen,
Where death around me flew;
At grim Corunna I have been,
And bloody Waterloo.

But why begin a dismal tale
That only makes me mourn?
My feelings now are weak and frail,
So long by hardships worn.

And few will pity to me show,
Or wait my words to hear;
The longer that I live, I grow
A greater stranger here.

I soon must fall in sorrow's blast,
And, oh! the thought is sad;
And this of all does grieve me most,
That none a tear will shed.

My life had many hopes and fears;
Now little must remain—
And in that little there appears
Nought left but grief and pain.

And oh ! it grieves me to the soul,
To live and die unknown ;
While some in fame and pleasures roll,
For deeds the poor hath done.

But most I mourn because no friend
Is left to mourn with me,
And thus my dark and dreary end
Adds to my misery.

Had I one friend to take my part,
And watch me draw my latest breath,
In peace from life I would depart,
And soundly would I sleep in death.

Yes, I have one—the sinner's friend—
Who will not leave me in the grave ;
He is my rest, I will depend
On Him my soul from death to save.

The Unfortunate Emigrant.

Solitary, sad, and weary,
Lonely as a man can be;
Night is sleepless, day is dreary,
Joy returns no more to me.

Forlorn and lost, I wander here
In hopeless, discontented care;
Where all around is dark and drear,
Without a friend my woes to share.

And keen remorse recalls the days
That in my thoughtless youth were spent,
Rejecting wisdom's pleasant ways
For those which nought but sorrow sent.

Those days are dwelt upon with pain,
When with my brothers I did toil,
Nor thirsted after worldly gain,
Nor thought of hearts that would beguile.

But all those happy days are o'er,
The sunshine of my life is gone;
As once I felt I feel no more,
My heart is desolate and lone.

The frowning future dark and dull,
My health impair'd and spirits low,
A languid sadness haunts me still,
Nor leaves me wheresoe'er I go.

I wish for that enduring mind
That fate and fortune cannot lower,
Nor looks before nor looks behind,
But easy lives the present hour.

With such, content serenely dwells,
However low their station be;
Envy their bosom never feels,
From care their spirit's ever free.

It is in vain I would forget,
Still to the past my memory turns;
On pleasures gone my soul is set,
For these alone my bosom burns.

In youth I dreamt of wealth and fame,
Of praise, of honour, and renown,
And hoped the fondly cherished flame
Would all my expectations crown.

But cold misfortune traced me still,
Threw all my schemes unto the wind;
And weak within me grows the will,
When not a hope is left behind.

Solitary, sad and weary,
Lonely as a man can be;
Night is sleepless, day is dreary,
Joy returns more to me.

To a Poetess.

Hail! sister spirit, fair and wild,
That wanders where the muses dwell.
In fancy's lonely track exiled,
With one dark thought too deep to tell.

We love thy mild, pathetic strain,
That stirs and kindles in the heart,
Impassioned, pure, without a stain.
A flame from which we cannot part.

Did learning teach thee to adore,
To elevate, repress, refine,
And draw from nature's varied store
Those sweet and simple truths of thine,

That come like the approach of spring,
With buds of promise bright and new,
When birds are warbling on the wing,
And joy lights on the heart like dew?

Not Hemans in her summer's bloom,
With all the flush of sunny flowers,
More sweetly lights us through the gloom,
When cares arise and sorrow lowers.

Not Browning, in her eagle's flight,
Loud as the storm when thunders roll,
Awakes a stream of purer light,
Or touches nearer to the soul.

Though grand to hear the tempest blow,
We love the breeze that steals along;
Though splendid be the river's flow,
The streamlet has the sweetest song.

The soul that penetrates the mist
That clouds it in obscurity,
Inspired with thoughts that cannot rest,
But fight for ever to be free;

That breaks the barrier of fate,
Untaught, unaided in the strife,
Proves something in the mind is great,
And fresh and full of Nature's life.

And such art thou, delightful dame;
Thy lot, though humble and unknown,
Could never quench the glowing flame
That triumphed over fortune's frown.

That friends may smile upon thy path,
And higher still thy muse aspire,
Untouched by fortune's chilling wrath,
I wish thee, with a large desire.

To a Young Lady.

Dear maid, I am unknown to thee,
Alike thou art unknown to me,
Yet love is not confined to glow
Where friendship wears a loving show.
Love is a tender, secret sense,
Disdains to make a false pretence;
No one that passion can control,—
It sways the feelings of the soul.

My thoughts I cannot all confine
Within my bosom to repine;
Be false conceptions far away,
Sweet lady, read my simple lay.

Since first thy gentle form I saw,
It was not nature's honoured law
To live, to strive in silence here,
And mingle thoughts of hope and fear:
Far other joys would I desire,
The joys that now my breast inspire.
Thy every grace, so sweet and fair,
With such a mild, attractive air,
Would banish far each rude design,
And knit my heart and soul to thine.
If I could only call thee friend,
Thy sweet society would lend
A charm far dearer to my heart
Than fame or riches could impart.

Hail, friendship! dear, delightful tie,
The source of all our earthly joy;
Fain would I now that bliss implore,
And to thee all my spirit pour.

Fain would I now my heart reveal,
And not a thought from thee conceal;
Anticipation points the way,
Yet doubts and fears my soul betray.
But why should such my mind employ,
Which may my future peace destroy?
Why trembles still a heart that's true?
May honour, virtue, bear me through?
It surely must be Heaven's design
For souls to act as they incline,
If it be in a honoured cause,
And justified by sacred laws.
Then should we on some happier day
(That day perhaps not far away)
Each other's joys and pleasures know,
And likewise other's care and woe:
To act a part for other's weal,
And still alike for others feel.
No joy can we compare to this—
It is the soul of earthly bliss,—
A soothing, soft idea brings
Beyond all other earthly things.
Farewell, dear maid, and such be thine,
Forgive my rude, imperfect line;

And as thou art of high degree,
Should this be an offence to thee,
Unknown still let the writer be.

To a Friend in America.

Dear Jeannie, when you tell us that your heart
Is every hour in Cumnock, where thy youth
Was spent, we feel it sad to think that thou
Dost weary for thy native land so much,
When far away beyond the rolling sea.
That in the world the truest friends should live
So far apart, and of each other's weal
So seldom hear, gives cause of much regret,
And at a time when friends are needed most;
For, in our early life, we never thought
True love and friendship in the world so rare.
We, who yet dwell within our native vale
(Where you have dwelt), reflect upon with pain
The youthful pleasures that were spent with thee,

For sorrows have been multiplied since then,
And many a year has come and passed away?
And times are changed, Jeannie, with us now,
For we are scattered here and there, and some
Are in their graves; but those that still remain
(What time we chance to meet around the fire)
Delight to tell the stories of old times
When you were with us, and thy name is still
Familiar when we talk of happy days.

The other evening, as I wandered out
Along the way of our paternal home,
My heart grew sad with pleasure and with pain:
Its windows glittered in the setting sun,
The little park before the door was clad
With yellow corn, all waving ripe and fair.
The recollection of thy cheerful face
Fell like a gleam of sunshine on my soul;
And, while I lingered on thy favourite walks,
Felt sorry that we could not meet again.
And many of the people living there
Make frequent mention of thy name, and say
This is the place where Jeannie Douglas dwelt,

That maiden of the light and cheerful heart,
Who charmed the winter evenings with her mirth;
And many of thy sayings they repeat.
And when some incident reminds us of
The frolics that were wont to entertain,
How Jeannie had rejoiced in her heart
Had she been here, your old companions cry.
We still remember of the winter days,
When watching for thee coming through the glen
To spend the evening at our father's home,
While in like manner we returned to thine,
'Mid joys that cheer but never wound the heart.
Those were the pleasures that we feel no more,
And now we mourn they ne'er come back again,
As thou dost mourn them in a foreign land:
Think not, then, Jeannie, that thou art alone,
When sadly dwelling on the happy past,
The sorrows that you feel are mixed with ours.
And, Jeannie, we regard thee not the less,
Though we are parted long, and far between,
For thou art ever living in our hearts,
Linked with the memory of better days.

Friendship.

Wealth is but a grovelling pleasure,
Though it may our minds employ;
Friendship is a higher treasure,
Friendship is a purer joy.

Those that strive to live unmoved
Till their youthful days are gone;
And by woman have been loved,
Chooseth still to live alone;

Far away they should be banished,
To some place where love's unknown,
Every ray of pleasure vanished,
Every social comfort flown.

Dull and darkened is the mind
That to love was never given,
Void of feeling, ever blind,
In the road that leads to heaven.

When this life of ours is over,
Where the wandering spirit goes
Living man cannot discover,
Yet, believing, stronger grows.

That the souls to us delighting
Then shall in perfection smile,
All the soul to love inviting,
And for ever free from guile.

Woman, then in love presiding,
Shall no more in years consume,
But for ever softly gliding,
In a bright, unfading bloom.

Pleasures of Nature.

I meet with a pleasing delight
  In each thing around me I see;
The smile of the day and the gloom of the night
  Have nothing unsightly to me;
Wherever I wander I find
New pleasures arise in the mind.

There is nothing unworthy of praise;
  The One who created is wise;
Wherever I search, and wherever I gaze,
  No object is found to despise:
His wisdom is traced in a flower,
In it we may learn of His power.

How pleasant it is to adore
  Such glorious beauty displayed;
And these in my heart I did worship before
  I thought of by whom they were made.
The woods and the hills were my home,
Wherever my footsteps did roam.

Dear Scotland, my favourite earth,
With thee I would live and would die;
The home of my fathers, the land of my birth,
And the tempests that roll in the sky,
Have pleasures more dear to my heart
Than the suns of the East could impart.

Sonnet.

Sad I feel when thinking on my friends,
Who slumber in the cold and solemn grave;
How strange it is that I make no amends,
But, careless still, would wish the thought to waive
Far from myself; when death perhaps is near
I picture out long life and happy days;
Life's pleasures turn me from the guileless ways
That once I trod. Oh, vain, deluding hopes,

In thee I lose the gentle beam of truth
That led me calmly through the days of youth—
A parent's earnest warnings and reproofs—
For ever to the world my heart is set.
Why should I dream about the praise of men?
Why not return to virtue's paths again?

Parting.

Eliza, it is hard to part
With one so precious to my heart;
But, dearest love, where'er I be,
Remember, I will think of thee,
And love thee still, and ne'er forget,
Although we never more should meet.
Thy sympathy, thy smiles and sighs,
The tender tears that fill thine eyes,
Shall all within my heart remain,
Dear love, until we meet again.

A Highland Tour:

OR, SPORTING JOHN.

A TALE.

In summer, when a cloud of smoke
Hangs over Glasgow town,
And steamers, thronged with passengers,
Are sailing up and down

The beauteous river of the Clyde,
Where many a palace fair,
Made every heart rejoice to see
A scene so rich and rare.

On such a morn our hero sailed
Upon a Highland tour;
The steamer, called the Chevalier,
Went fifteen miles an hour.

But to relate the glorious splores
That happened by the way,
I need not try, for it would take
Me more than half a day.

He was a gallant, fearless youth,
And time was all his own;
His father was a gentleman,
And he his only son.

Though in a noble sphere of life
This city boy was bred,
No thought of selfish pride had he
Within his heart or head.

He had an easy, artless air
That gains respect from all;
And, though unknown to want, his heart
Grew soft at pity's call.

Not over scrupulous, I ween,
Of wit and talents rare—
With drinkers he could laugh and drink,
With swearers even swear.

Whate'er society he met
Was all the same to him;
With sober people he could be
As grave and sober's them.

A company of youthful friends
All full of joy with mirth,—
To keep them happy was to him
Like heaven upon the earth.

But something in his manner still
Bespoke the gentleman;
And yet it might be said that he
From good to evil ran.

That night, upon the Isle of Mull
He landed in his glory,
A place he ne'er had been before—
Its name was Tobermory.

Some twenty steps above the pier
M'G——r keeps an inn;
We read, I'm sure, a mile from shore,
His name upon the sign.

He had two daughters, but the best
Was charming little Jean,
Whom John did call, from first to last,
His sweet wee Highland queen.

Though everywhere the house was throng'd
With strangers up and down,
Young Jeannie still a moment snatched
To tig and toy with John.

The two that night, though strange it seems,
It is deserving praise,
Appeared the same as they had been
Acquainted all their days.

Next morning, when the steamer bell
Rung loudly in the bay,
John swore that he was far enough,
And would not stir that day.

M'G——r was a crafty rogue,
Said he, "Young gentleman,
What care you for the Isle of Skye?
Stay with my daughter Jean."

Away the steamer sailed again,
Bound for the Isle of Skye;
The breeze was blowing fresh and free,
The seas were rolling high.

The happy pair were left behind,
Their love was true and brief;
How sad to think affection proves
The greatest cause of grief!

Upon the following day the ship
Returned from Skye at noon,
And all the Glasgow passengers
Looked sad for want of John.

One hour to spend (how soon it flies!),
Up to the inn we ran,
But when we met with John, alas!
He seemed an altered man.

For he was tipsy, and he swore,
By heaven and by his Maker,
In Tobermory he would die,
Or home to Glasgow take her.

And Jeannie's face was changed too,
Her cheeks had deeper dyes,
And sorrow pressed her gentle heart,
For tears were in her eyes.

Her father's blood began to boil
With burning Highland rage;
Poor Jeannie fluttered here and there,
Like a wild bird in a cage.

"Oh! father, let me go," she said,
"And I'll return again;
I wish to visit Glasgow town,
Where I have never been."

"Mark what I say," the old man's voice
Rang loudly through the hall—
"To-day you shall not leave this house;"
But Jeannie said, "I shall."

At this his words began to break,
Tears from his eyes did start;
"What shall I do?" he turned and cried,
"This child will break my heart.

"Six daughters I have had, but none
Did use me thus before,
And she the youngest of them all—
It hurts me very sore.

"My youngest daughter ruined thus!
By heaven it shall not be."
Poor Jeannie fled into a room,
Her father turned the key.

The little maid she gave a scream,
And that was all we heard;
John gazed into the old man's face,
But uttered not a word,

And walked out as one who seemed
To care for nothing there;
He reached the ship, and still he wore
The same undaunted air.

And slowly down the quiet bay
The boat began to move;
Though John was silent, yet he showed
No signs of parting love.

Oh ! love, thou art a wondrous thing,
I'll ne'er forget that day,
When standing on the crowded deck
In Tobermory bay.

Upon the pier—but how it was
I cannot understand—
Young Jeannie stood, and there she waved
A kerchief in her hand.

John threw himself into the sea,
'Tis said to swim ashore;
But ere man's efforts could avail,
He sank to rise no more.

If any one should chance to read
This simple lay of mine,
Where'er thou art, by land or sea,
Beware of love and wine.

Ben Brown.

A long, long time it is ago,
Since Ben and I were schooled together;
Such sport again I'll never know,
As we have had with one another;
He was, indeed, like any brother;
At nothing Ben did look behind him;
Would take my part without a swither,—
A coward none did ever find him.

He led the sports for many a year,
Was reckoned fearless and commanding;
And soon he learned to curse and swear,
Both ill and good together branding,—
But this was past my understanding;
All efforts were in vain to save him;
For many a serious reprimanding
The teacher and his parents gave him.

I knew his parents well enough;
A minister they meant to make him;
But Ben was not the solemn stuff,
And home again they had to take him.
The teacher wont to thrash and shake him,
And called him names I dare not mention,
And o'er and o'er again would whake him,
To waken up his apprehension.

But teachers then, you are aware,
Were but a set of foolish noddies;
In fact, they did not seem to care
For neither human souls or bodies.
How much enlightened now the road is
Our present teachers are pursuing;
May Heaven help!—the field so broad is,
So great the work that they are doing.

I met with Ben at twenty-one,
'Twas at a country fair I found him—
And all was laughter, joke, and fun,—
For joy in every shape had crowned him.

A flock of country girls were round him;
He then appeared completely carried;
On love affairs I tried to sound him;
He swore he never would be married.

He looked then a sprightly man,
And filled the female eye most sweetly,
And after every game he ran,
A dancer, too, and danced so neatly,
The ladies were inspired completely;
But so absorbing was their notion,
I cannot tell it here discreetly;
You might not credit such devotion.

Ben meant to count but little on them—
Indeed, it made me sad to hear it—
The thought had never flashed upon him
Of any virtues they inherit.
To talk about a virtuous spirit,
Said he, is but the talk of fashion:
And constancy, he could not bear it,—
The ruling power with him was passion.

At thirty Ben was quite a swell,
Had made a wonderful sensation,
Believed in neither heaven nor hell,
And made a mockery of salvation;
The wildest thoughts could put a face on,
Laughed very loud at superstition,
Talked fluently about creation,
And called it natural intuition.

The clergy frequently had fined him,
And held him much in dire suspension;
But through his success others joined him,
And this was past their comprehension.
They blamed Old Nick with the invention,
And struck their pulpits to annoy him.
But what was better, let me mention,
They threatened fairly to destroy him.

At forty he was altered greatly,
And failed to make so much impression;
For he had been accustomed lately
To stand the threats of many a session.

They made him pay for his transgression,
Which served to bring him to his senses ;
Thus out of many a bitter lesson
Arise the best of consequences.

More thoughtful now he was and sober,
And then he took to making money ;
He told me that his sport was over,
And he had got as much as any.
I thought him laughable and funny,
But laughed himself but very seldom—
Delighted to divert a cronie,
And with a joke he made him welcome.

I recollect his wit was bright,
Nor ever travelled far to find it ;
Whatever point he struck with light,
Another flash was left behind it,
Another and another joined it,
And fresher grew beneath his touch ;
I know not where he could have twined it,
His fancy was so rare and rich.

Though this was beautiful and good,
Some sober heads were shaking at him,
Who would have floored him, if they could,
Through spite; they could not help but hate him;
With all their wisdom would debate him,
Most furiously he was assailed;
And when a fool they thought to make him,
Ben always in the end prevailed.

The ladies talked much about him—
Of course they meant to talk but lightly—
In short, they had begun to doubt him—
We must admit they doubted rightly;
And still he looked gay and sprightly;
His manners were refined and easy;
And what more, if I'm speaking rightly,
Oh, ladies, would it take to please ye?

At fifty I may say but little,
Except that he was growing wiser,
Had learned himself at home to settle,
And woman now he could not prize her,

"And yet," said he, "I don't despise her;
Oh no, indeed, I really do not;
But presently I'll not entice her,"—
And whether this is right I know not.

At sixty-nine I did not know him,
His eyes were red and running water,
His relatives that were below him
Had got the sway. "It does not matter,"
Said he to me, "I'll not get better;"
He shook me by the hand and mumbled,
"My body's now a perfect shatter,
Completely broken down and humbled.

"My life has been a life of folly,
There's nothing but the dregs remaining,
Sometimes I feel perplexed wholly,
With nought but doubt and darkness reigning.
Away into the future straining
I search for faith but cannot find it;
To part with life I'm not complaining,
If I were sure of aught behind it.

"I'll tell you how I went astray;
You know yourself I never married;
I've therefore been for many a day
With relatives completely worried.
Depend upon it, they have hurried
My life into this sad condition;
They would rejoice to see me buried—
Oh what a devilish disposition.

"Had I been wise, and wed at twenty,
My life from this had been redeemed;
I might have lived in peace and plenty,
Of luxury had never dreamed.
Life is not really what it seemed;
But how it goeth now I care not,
Old age is sadder than I deemed;
I fain would tell you all, but dare not."

A hardened crew he had about him,
Without a spark of generous feeling;
The strong desire to live without him
Had grown within them past concealing.

I scorned to see their selfish dealing;
Man is a selfish, grovelling creature;
Was there no gratitude appealing
Upon the side of human nature?

"My neighbours now will talk, said he,
And call me a regardless man;
But what is that when I am free,
They do not know and never can
The great Creator's wondrous plan.
There's much conjecture here below;
But soon I'll measure out life's span,
And know it all, or nothing know.

"To change the structure of my mind
Could not be done, and cannot be;
When those around me say I'm blind,
'Tis then, and only then, I see.
With all mankind I would agree,
But cannot sink my soul to please;
And though they lightly talk of me,
I hope they all may die in peace."

Uncertainty of Worldly Pleasures.

There is a sorrow dwells upon the heart,
And leaves it not because it is its own;
There is a sorrow when with friends we part
To meet no more, and we are left alone
To mourn and ponder when our hopes are gone.
There is a sorrow mingled with our joys,
Whatever here we set our hearts upon;
How sure, how soon, devouring death destroys,
Unless our hopes are fixed beyond the earth and skies.

The worldly heart is sad, but cannot tell
Why it is so, for words cannot express
Its painful care, and still it strives to dwell
Upon the objects of its own distress,
And to the slave of vanity, alas!
How dark appears the shadows of the past;

When looking forward fain would he retrace
His steps, for, when delusion's veil is cast
Aside, the stern reality has come at last.

Then, what is life with all that it contains?
Although it may our busy minds employ;
No studied scheme the messenger detains,
Our dearest expectations to destroy.
Though scenes around us may attract the eye,
A slight impression they can leave behind;
We wander on pursuing gleams of joy,
Still hoping more than ever we can find,
Though gaining much in life can ne'er content the mind.

Of worldly joys, who little seeks to know,
Has of this life the easiest and the best;
The more our joy the greater is our woe,
And when we have a sense of all possessed,
Are restless still without a place of rest.
"True happiness on earth cannot be found,"
No object and no spot can make us blest;
The world is full of wrongs of every kind,
And all that we enjoy is nothing in the end.

Happy are they whose aspirations dwell
Above the reach of worldly pleasures' sway,
Who in their hearts the light of faith can feel,
Brightening up with heavenly cheering ray,
Quelling the fears that cloud the awful day.
When this uncertain life is at an end,
Their's is the truest joy on life's rough way,
That liveth still though griefs the bosom rend,
Although without the aid of one endearing friend.

Their's is a happiness beneath the sun,
Far purer than the world can ever bring;
How, soon, alas! this sand of life is run!
They joy the great Creator's praise to sing,
Bidding their days be swiftly on the wing,
To bear them past this weary scene of cares,
Where life anew shall into being spring,
No more involved with dark foreboding fears,
While times move round and round without a trace of years.

Language.

Well I like the common language
That is spoken by the people,
That is used in conversation,
In a plain and simple manner,
Clearly to the understanding.
Never can I feel instructed
With a style that's high and strained,
There is something still to search for;
When we find it out with labour,
Maketh but a light impression.
Those that have a large idea,
So that words cannot express it
In a style to be decerned,
When we see the words before us,
Then the thought is not completed.
What is called simple language,
When we see its meaning clearly,
Often might be called the greatest,
For it has fulfilled the purpose.
That has been intended for it.

Life is Pleasant.

Life is very sweet and pleasant,
After all that's said about it,
After all the cry of curses
That have been drawn down upon it.
There is something in our actions
That is very much neglected;
Otherwise we might be happy,
Very happy and contented,
For there's nothing wrong in nature;
All is good and wisely ordered;
If we would not be so selfish,
And more kind to one another.
We are often high and prideful,
And engross'd with vain endeavours
To attain a source of pleasure
That was ne'er intended for us,—
Thus our sorrows are created.
If our minds were cultivated,
That we might have higher knowledge

Of the laws that rule our being,
Life would be a perfect Heaven,
Which, in time, will be attained;
This I do believe sincerely.
There is nothing wrong in labour;
Exercise makes up a portion
Of the laws implanted in us;
There is nothing wrong whatever,
When we make a firm endeavour
To grow better men, and wiser.

FINIS.

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